

Concessionary fees: An Explanation

Mary Ward Centre, June 2011

From the start of enrolment in 2011, some courses in our prospectus have three fees. In the main, these are courses which have some form of accreditation, ie there is an exam at the end of the course. There are a few others which also have three fees, eg beginner computing courses. This is due to changes in the funding we receive from the Skills Funding Agency.

It may look complicated, but it isn't! Read on.....

Will I be eligible for a concessionary fee?

Yes, if you are in receipt of an income based benefit (such as Working Tax credit or Housing Benefit), or are an unwaged dependant on someone who is. However, from September 2011, the level of concessionary fee that you pay for some courses will depend on exactly which benefit you are receiving.

I am in receipt of a means tested benefit. The course I want has three fees shown in the prospectus. How much will I pay?

- Most of the courses show two prices (eg £90 Concs £32). This means that anyone on a means tested benefit, including Job Seekers Allowance and Education Support Allowance, or older people whose main income is their state pension, will be eligible for a concessionary fee on those courses.

So in the example above, a concessionary student will pay £32 plus the membership fee.

- Some courses show three prices: eg £90, MW Conc £32, Conc £5. For these, **only** students on an Active Benefit eg JSA or ESA will be eligible for the lowest fee quoted.

If you are on another means tested benefit, such as Working Tax Credit, Income Support, or another income based benefit, then the Mary Ward Concession will apply, and you will pay £32, plus the membership fee.

My course has three fees. I can't afford to pay the middle concessionary fee, and now find I am not eligible for the lowest fee. What can I do?

You are welcome to apply to our Student Support Fund. We are happy to try and help.

State Registered Pensioners

If your state registered pension is your sole or main income, then you must sign the declaration on the enrolment form. You will then be eligible for the MW concession.

***NB. This does not apply to courses in the Over 60's section.**

Over 60's Courses

Apart from the Mary Ward Club, which is nil fee, all courses in the Over 60's section now have two fees. We are no longer able to offer free courses in this section to those on means tested benefits.

The first fee is the ordinary concessionary fee, and anyone over 60, or for whom these classes would be suitable, can enrol at that fee. To be eligible for the lower, concessionary fee in the Over 60's section you must be in receipt of a means tested benefit, such as Pension Guarantee Benefit, Income Support, Employment Support Allowance.

Centre Supported (CS) Courses

You will see that some courses have CS against the course codes. These courses are funded directly by student fees, ie there is no government subsidy provided. This means that the fees will be higher than for other courses, and the number of concessionary fee places will be limited, or may not be available at all.

For CS courses, where there are concessionary places, there will be a limit of 25% of concessionary places. Where there are no concessionary places offered at all, then there will be other very similar courses running which are not Centre Supported, to give students the opportunity to enrol as a concessionary student on these courses.

How to enrol as a concessionary student

Please bring evidence of your benefit dated within the last six months, eg a letter from the benefits agency or a current bank statement. If you were a student with us previously, we still need to see your evidence again, however recently you enrolled.

Concessionary students are not able to enrol online.

Send us your evidence by post with your enrolment form, or bring it with you if you are applying in person. If you are a pensioner and your State Pension is your sole income, you should sign the inside of the enrolment form in the space provided.

SUMMARY

MW Concessions apply to you if you are:

- A state pensioner and your main/sole income is your state pension; (In the Over 60's section, the MW Concession is the higher fee quoted)
- In receipt of an income based benefit*, or are the unwaged dependant of someone who is claiming.

*Income based benefits include: Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. There is a full list in the middle section of the enrolment form.

The full concession applies to you if you are:

- Unemployed and in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), or Employment Support Allowance (ESA);
- Aged 19-24 and enrolling on your first full level 2 or level 3 qualification
- Over 16 and under 19 in the calendar year in which the course starts, and are NOT in full time education.

You are not eligible for a concession, if you are:

- In full time education and training;
- An overseas student (ie you have not been ordinarily resident in the UK/EU for at least three years).

Student Support Fund

Please remember that if you need help with fees, travel or materials for your course, you can apply to the Student Support Fund; we will do our best to help you.